

DECEMBER MONTHLY THEME:

OPENING TO JOY

It's easy to get tricked, taken for a ride, convinced that joy is a possession. We may start to think joy is to be opened just by us—as if it's a holiday special delivery waiting for us to unwrap it and keep forever. And who can blame us, with pain being so prevalent. Sadness seems to stay, so why can't joy? But maybe it is elusive for a reason. Maybe joy is slippery in order to help us understand that it was put here to fly. Or better yet: to be flung! To be passed, not possessed. To be spread between you and me, between the ones who received its gift and the ones that have been looking for its treasure for a very long time.

Maybe joy is a beautiful and elegant contagion, over which we have more control than we think. If only we share it. If only we notice that joy is not ours to keep, but ours to give. Maybe joy opens us as much as we open to it. Maybe that's the way light leaks into our world.

Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?

1. Who helps you see the joy in front of you?
2. How has joy surprised you during the pandemic?
3. How has your definition of joy changed as you've grown older?
4. Are you mostly a creator of joy, receiver of joy, notice-er of joy or spreader of joy?
5. What needs removed from your life in order for joy to expand, or return?
6. Are you too responsible to let joy in?
7. When was the last time you did something "useless"? Might joy be waiting for you there?

Wise Words:

Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.

Robin Wall Kimmerer

Twinkle lights are the perfect metaphor for joy. Joy is not a constant. It comes to us in moments – often ordinary moments. Sometimes we miss out on the bursts of joy because we're too busy chasing down extraordinary moments. Other times we're so afraid of the dark that we don't dare let ourselves enjoy the light.

Brené Brown

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.

Thich Nhat Hanh

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

Rabindranath Tagore

Joy is the justice,
we give ourselves.
It is Maya's caged bird
sung free past the prison bars
holding spirits bound—
without due process
without just cause...

J. Drew Lanham

Full piece at <https://emergencemagazine.org/poem/joy-is-the-justice-we-give-ourselves/>